

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 have been examined. Claims 1-3, 5, 7-16, 18 and 20-26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Also, the Examiner has indicated that claims 4, 6, 17 and 19 contain allowable subject matter.

I. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over JP 09134586 to Katsumata (“Katsumata”) to U.S. Patent No. 5,768,236 to Kihara (“Kihara”).

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-10, 12-14, 16, 18, 20-23 and 25-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katsumata in view of Kihara.

A. Claim 1

Claim 1 has been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, Applicant submits that the rejection of such claim is now moot.

B. Claim 3

Since claims 3, 5, 7-10 and 12-13 are dependent upon claim 4 or 6, and the Examiner has indicated that claims 4 and 6 contain allowable subject matter, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

C. Claim 14

Applicant has incorporated the allowable subject matter of claim 17 into claim 14. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 14 is patentable over the cited reference.

D. Claim 16

Applicant has canceled claim 16, without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejection of claim 16 is now moot.

E. Claims 18, 20-23, 25 and 26

Since claims 18, 20-23, 25 and 26 are dependent upon claim 14, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Katsumata in view of Kihara and U.S. Patent No. 6,449,226 to Kumagai (“Kumagai”).

The Examiner has rejected claims 2 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katsumata in view of Kihara and Kumagai. However, since claims 2 and 15 are dependent upon one of allowable claims 4 and 14, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Katsumata in view of Kihara and U.S.

Patent No. 5,661,706 to Ohtomo (“Ohtomo”)

The Examiner has rejected claims 11 and 24 as being unpatentable over Katsumata in view of Kihara and Ohtomo. On pg. 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner refers to claims 2 and 15 in the rejection of claims 11 and 24. However, Applicant assumes this is merely a typographical error on the Examiner’s part.

In any event, since claim 11 is dependent upon allowed claim 4, Applicant submits that such claim is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency. Further, since claim 24 depends upon claim 14, and Ohtomo fails to cure the deficient teachings of Katsumata and Kato, with respect to claim 14, Applicant submits that claim 24 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

IV. Allowable Subject Matter

As stated above, the Examiner has indicated that claims 4, 6, 17 and 19 contain allowable subject matter. Applicant has canceled claim 17, without prejudice or disclaimer, and incorporated the subject matter of claim 17 into claim 14. Further, Applicant has rewritten claim 19 into independent form.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No.: 09/725,266

Attorney Docket No.: Q62049

V. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

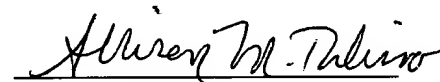
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